



COMMISSION ON AGING

Legislative Breakfast: December 3, 2010

Legislative Priorities for 2011 General Assembly Session

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging (COA) is pleased to work in partnership with the Senators and Delegates who represent us in Annapolis. The commission is prepared to review and evaluate any legislative initiative that relates to the well-being of seniors.

The COA has already identified some legislative priorities for the 2011 legislative session. We will work for enactment of these initiatives, and we invite every member of the county's delegation to join us in getting them passed.

(1) Aging in the Community – The Commission on Aging is deeply interested in the efforts of the former State Empowerment Zone Commission, now renamed the Communities for Lifetime Commission. Building on that foundation, and on some of the ideas found in a 2010 bill titled “Communities for a Lifetime,” which did not move in the legislature, the COA has developed a legislative proposal to be introduced in 2011. The intent of the legislation is to enable seniors to remain as active consumers and contributors to the economic, civil and social environment of Maryland communities, and to help communities remain desirable places for everyone to live. An excerpt from the draft legislation:

“ Therefore, the government of the state of Maryland and all its agencies and jurisdictions, including all counties and the City of Baltimore, shall consider carefully the needs of older adults, especially vulnerable older adults, when planning services and delivering services to residents of the state.

Included in that consideration, the state of Maryland and its agencies and jurisdictions shall undertake the following within their planning and delivery of services, so that more older adults are enabled to engage in their communities:

- Seek to expand affordable transportation options for older adults;
- Seek to expand affordable housing options for older adults, both as homeowners and as renters;
- Seek to expand public health and prevention programs that promote physical, mental, social and environmental health for older adults;

- Seek to expand employment and civic engagement options for older adults; and
- Seek innovative ways to expand needed services to support aging in the community within planned budgets.”

The COA is currently seeking broad support for this bill, and it welcomes the interest and support of all senators and delegates.

(2) Financial crimes – In 2010 Senator Jamie Raskin introduced SB 783 on financial crimes. It would enable law enforcement officials to seize money or property from a person who has committed a financial crime (such as embezzlement, exploitation) against a vulnerable adult, if that money or property was linked to the crime. This is similar to what is now done with drug crimes and mortgage fraud. The Commission on Aging supported the bill seniors are at great risk for financial crimes, and strengthening the penalties for such crimes, helps deter perpetrators. Unfortunately, the bill did not move in 2010. Senator Raskin is planning to revisit it and introduce it early in the 2011 session.

(3) Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) – The Commission on Aging has engaged in significant study of the end of life care this past summer, and concluded that additional legislation in this area would be valuable. The proposed MOLST legislation would address the issues relating to the administration of resuscitation and other life-sustaining treatments for critically ill persons. Senator-elect Karen Montgomery is planning to introduce the MOLST bill in the 2011 session.

The MOLST legislation will enable the use of one universal standardized form in the State of Maryland that will be accepted across all health care agencies (both hospitals and community care providers) which is not the case now. The form will include medical orders for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and other medical personnel regarding cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other life-sustaining treatment options for a specific patient. It will be valid in all health care facilities and in the community throughout Maryland. This order form shall be kept in the patient’s medical record in healthcare facilities and agencies.